

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCA-01 PPT-02 EB-11 EURE-00 USIE-00

PA-04 PRS-01 INRE-00 SSO-00 DRC-01 SAJ-01 /047 W

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O R 081518Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8607

INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

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DEPT PASS USIA/IEE AND IBS

E.O. 11652 N/A

TAGS: UR CPAS CGEN

SUBJ: PRESS INQUIRY ON SULSKIENE (KUDIRKA) CASE

REF: STATE 091963, MOSCOW 6502

1. EMBASSY WAS QUERIED ON SULSKIENE/KUDIRKA CASE MAY 8 BY UPI MOSCOW BUREAU CHIEF MOSELEY AND AP CORRESPONDENT BROENING, BOTH OF WHOM HAD BEEN FULLY BRIEFED ON CASE BY SULSKIENE INTERMEDIARY KOVALEV (MOSCOW 7069). CONSOFFS AND PRESS ATTACHE REPLIED TO CORRESPONDENTS' QUESTIONS ACCORDING TO PRESS GUIDANCE PROVIDED STATE 078505, ALTHOUGH WE WERE ALSO OBLIGED TO CLARIFY EMBASSY ROLE AS DESCRIBED TO CORRESPONDENTS BY KOVALEV.

2. CORRESPONDENTS WERE AWARE OF SULSKIENE'S INTERCEPTION AT VILNIUS TRAIN STATION APRIL 28 AND OF FACT THAT KOVALEV WAS TWICE DENIED ACCESS TO EMBASSY MARCH 20 AND 21. THEY THEREFORE PUSHED HARD ON QUESTION OF ACCESS TO EMBASSY. CONSOFFS REPLIED THAT WE CONSIDER DENIAL OF ACCESS TO EMBASSY ON PART PERSONS WITH LEGITIMATE CONSULAR BUSINESS TO BE IN VIOLATION BOTH GENERAL INTERNATIONAL PRACTICE AND US-SOVIET CONSULAR CONVENTION. ASKED COURSE OF ACTION WE WOULD TAKE IF SULSKIENE UNABLE LEAVE VILNIUS, CONSOFFS EXPRESSED READINESS TRAVEL THERE TO MEET WITH HER.

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3. CONSOFFS REFUSED TO SPECULATE ON ANY EVENTUAL CITIZENSHIP CLAIM

BY SIMAS KUDIRKA AND THEY EMPHASIZED THAT IDENTITY AND CITIZENSHIP OF SULSKIENE MUST FIRST BE ESTABLISHED. BROENING NONETHELESS PURSUED QUESTION OF SIMAS AND ADVANCED THEORY THAT IF HE IS EVENTUALLY

FOUND TO BE AMCIT, "IE WOULD SHOW SOVIETS HAD NO BASIS ON WHICH TO ARREST HIM FOR ATTEMPTING GO TO US." CONSOFFS POINTED OUT THAT REGARDLESS OF OUR OWN CITIZENSHIP DETERMINATION, SOVIET AUTHORITIES PRESUMABLY WOULD CONTINUE REGARD SUCH PERSONS AS SOVIET CITIZENS. THEY ADVISED CORRESPONDENTS THAT SUCH SPECULATION ON SIMAS' SITUATION COULD JEOPARDIZE PRESENT EFFORTS TO ASSIST SULSKIENE, AND THEY NOTED THAT US SPONSOR (WHOM CONSOFFS REFUSED TO IDENTIFY) HAD APPARENTLY DECIDED AGAINST PUBLICITY THUS FAR. FYI: GIVEN DRAMATIC ASPECTS THIS STORY, HOWEVER, WE ARE NOT SANGUINE THAT OUR CAUTIONARY ADVICE WILL BE HEED. END FYI.

4. EMBASSY ATTEMPTING CONTACT KOVALEV (A SAKHAROV ASSOCIATE) TO ASCERTAIN CURRENT STATUS OF CASE. ON BASIS THEIR OWN RECENT CONVERSATION WITH KOVALEV CORRESPONDENTS CONFIRMED EMBASSY UNDERSTANDING THAT SULSKIENE HAS IMPRESSION SHE WILL BE PERMITTED TO VISIT EMBASSY SHORTLY AFTER MAY 9 HOLIDAY. STOESEL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 08 MAY 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: blochd0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974MOSCOW06886
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740111-0974
From: MOSCOW
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740565/aaaacfto.tel
Line Count: 82
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: STATE 091963, MOSCOW 6502
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: blochd0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 15 JUN 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <05 JUN 2002 by elyme>; APPROVED <06 FEB 2003 by GarlanWA>; WITHDRAWN <13 Jun 2005 by BoyleJA, PRIVACY>; RELEASED <15 JUN 2005 by powellba2>; APPROVED <17 JUN 2005 by blochd0>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRESS INQUIRY ON SULSKIENE (KUDIRKA) CASE
TAGS: CPAS, CGEN, UR
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005